

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: PFOR, IN, CH, UR, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER TAKES PRAGMATIC VIEW OF RELATIONS WITH
THE UNITED STATES

1. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LEFTIST CENTRAL NEW SERVICE
ON OCTOBER 23, PRIME MINISTER GANDHI MADE A NUMBER OF SIGNIFI-
CANT OBSERVATIONS. EXCERPTS FOLLOW:

Q. DESPITE THE RECENT INDO-US JOINT COMMISSION MEETING,
IT SEEMS THAT THE 'DEMISE OF DEMOCRACY' THEME IN THE US
ADMINISTRATION ABOUT INDIA PERSISTS. DO YOU FEEL SUCH CON-
TINUING CAMPAIGN CAN IN ANY WAY BE CONDUCIVE TO INDO-US
COOPERATION BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT AND EQUALITY?

PM: AS I HAVE SAID, PERSONALLY I AM NOT BOTHERED BY
THESE STATEMENTS BECAUSE I THINK ANY INTELLIGENT PERSON CAN
COMPARE THEM WITH STATEMENTS MADE OR ACTIONS TAKEN WITH
REGARD TO OTHER COUNTRIES. SO I THINK WE WOULD LEAVE IT TO
THE PUBLIC TO JUDGE IT FOR THEMSELVES. WE HAVE ALSO TO NOTE
THAT STATEMENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE TRYING TO MODIFY
EARLIER STATEMENTS AND PERHAPS WE SHOULD LEAVE IT AT THAT.
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INDIAN AND THE US, AS WELL AS INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES, MUST MAKE AN EARNEST ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW.

Q: MADAME PRIME MINISTER, YOU HAVE AGAIN AND AGAIN REFERRED TO SOME POWERFUL EXTERNAL FORCES THREATENING INDIA'S STABILITY AND IN THE CONTEXT YOU ALSO REFERRED TO REPORTS AND CHARGES AGAINST THE CIA OPERATIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

PM: A GREAT DEAL OF LITERATURE HAS APPEARED AND IS APPEARING ALL OVER THE WORLD REGARDING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE CIA. ALMOST ALL OF IT IS FROM AMERICAN SCHOLARS OR THOSE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF EX-MEMBERS OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS. THE ONLY WAY WE CAN COUNTERACT SUCH INTERFERENCE FROM ANY SOURCE WHATSOEVER IS FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE TO BE MORE ALERT AND WE SHOULD MAKE THEM AWARE OF THIS SITUATION.

Q: ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM HONG KONG QUOTING THE HSINHUA NEWS AGENCY, CHINA SEEMS TO BE HAPPY AT THE RESULTS OF THE INDO-US JOINT COMMISSION MEETING. SOME PEOPLE WANT TO INTERPRET THIS AS A CHANGE IN CHINA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIA. DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY BASIS FOR SUCH A CONCUSSION? IF NOT, WHAT IN YOUR VIEW MAY HAVE PROMPTED CHINA TO SO FAVORABLY REACT TO THE OUTCOME OF THE INDO-US MEETING WHILE STILL CONTINUING ITS VIRULENT TIRADE AGAINST INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION?

PM: I MAKE NO CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND CHINESE THINKING AND I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD READ TOO MUCH INTO THEIR CLAIM OR THEIR CRITICISM, BUT OUR POLICY REMAINS ONE OF DEVELOPING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES. WE HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THE US GOVERNMENT IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN GLOBAL PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO OUR OWN REGION. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BUILD COOPERATION WITH THEM IN THE VARIOUS FIELDS ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY, MUTUAL BENEFIT AND RECIPROCITY.

THE JOINT MEETING OF THE INDO-US JOINT COMMISSION
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DELINATED THESE ISSUES OF COOPERATION IN A CONCRETE MANNER. WITH CHINA ALSO IT HAS BEEN OUR ENDEAVOUR TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS BUT THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY RESPONSE.

OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FOOTING. THEY ARE BASED ON FIRM FRIENDSHIP WHICH HAS BEEN TESTED BY TIME AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE SHOWN SOLIDARITY WITH US IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.

IT WILL NOT BE AFFECTED IN ANY WAY BY THE ATTITUDES OF
THIRD COUNTRIES.

Q. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE RESULTS OF THE HELSINKI
SUMMIT NOT ONLY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF WORLD PEACE AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, BUT ALSO FROM THAT OF PEACE
AND SECURITY IN ASIA?

PM: WE WELCOME THE HELSINKI SUMMIT AND THE DECLARA-
TION THAT ISSUED FROM THERE. EUROPE HAS BEEN THE SCENE
OF INTENSE RIVALRIES FOR MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES AND
MAJOR WARS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. EUROPE IS NOW MOVING TOWARDS
A PERIOD OF PEACE AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. BUT THIS
ESSAY IN UNDERSTANDING ENTAILS MANY LONG YEARS OF
CAREFULLY PREPARED WORK. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO SUCH ATTEMPT
IN ASIA EXCEPT FOR OUR OWN INITIATIVES. THE ACTIVITIES OF
MANY OUTSIDE FORCES ALSO MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR A CLOSER
UNDERSTANDING TO BE REACHED AMONGST ASIAN COUNTRIES. PEACE
AND COOPERATION ARE ALWAYS IMPORTANT, BUT FOR INDIA -- OR
FOR THAT MATTER ANY DEVELOPING COUNTRY -- THEY ARE DOUBLY
VALUABLE BECAUSE THEY WILL ENABLE US TO CONCENTRATE ON OVER-
COMING OUR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS. THE BEST
SECURITY FOR ASIAN COUNTRIES IS TO BUILD UP THEIR OWN
ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND STABILITY AND THAT IS WHY WE LAY SUCH
STRESS ON GREATER BILATERAL EXCHANGE WHICH WE HOPE WOULD
GROW INTO MULTINATIONAL ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS.

2. COMMENT: MRS. GANDHI TAKES A PRAGMATIC VIEW OF INDIA'S
RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, RESISTING ON THIS
OCCASION THE OPPORTUNITY TO PILLORY THE U.S. FOR INTERFERENCE
DESPITE A SERIES OF LOADED QUESTIONS FROM HER INTERLOCUTOR.
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